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DU reopening deferred fearing trouble

Varsity Correspondent

The sudden decision of the Dhaka University authorities not to reopen the university on September 12 as per declaration irked the general students and teachers.

They blasted the interim administration of acting Vice Chancellor Prof AFM Yusuf Haider for further prolonging the university's closure with "no justification". Even if classes resume on Thursday, it is already certain to cause at least six months' session jam, they expressed the apprehension.

The acting VC, however, defended his position, saying that he had to take such a decision, apprehending unrest on the campus.

"The report of repercussion panicked me to reopen the university," Prof Yusuf Haider told the

journalists on Thursday, referring to a report published in a Bangla daily Inquilab. "I prefer immediate reopening of the university, but the circumstances do not allow me as I can't take the risk of violence."

The university's executive body, Syndicate, in an emergency meeting on Wednesday night, postponed its previous decision of resuming the classes on September 12 and opening the halls for the residents on September 8.

It has been possible after the reshuffling of the Syndicate itself by special power of the President who is the Chancellor of the university. Acting President Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar on Wednesday

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DU reopening

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inducted three new members in the Syndicate retiring three others well before expiry of their term.

Political Science Professor Dr Aftab Ahmad, Prof Quamrul Hassan Chowdhury of Sociology and Khondker Mahub Uddin Ahmed MP replaced former governor of Bangladesh Bank Dr Farash Uddin, Barrister Showkat Ali Khan and Dr Nazrul Islam as Syndicate members nominated during previous Awami League regime.

Yet, the Syndicate members were locked in a heated debate over the agenda of reopening of the university. The members affiliated with opposition parties opposed the proposal that eventually deferred the university's reopening.

Of the 17 Syndicate members, 11 were present at the emergency meeting. Four of them submitted a note of dissent against Wednesday's decision.

Making an exception, the Home Secretary, who is a member of the Syndicate over the years, joined the Wednesday's meeting. "No

home secretaries had time to attend the Syndicate meetings in the last 10 years," said a DU teacher who is a member of the Syndicate.

"I have come after I was given a special invitation to attend this meeting," the Home Secretary was quoted as saying by the same teacher.

"No decision of the Syndicate could be revised within six months and if the VC considers necessary, he could call an emergency meeting, notifying the agenda of the meeting," Sharifullah Bhuiyan, teachers' elected Syndicate member, said citing Clause 10 of Chapter 5 of Dhaka University Calendar Part II.

Meanwhile, the decision not to reopen the university right now sparked off protests from Awami League-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), Progressive Students' Alliance (PSA), a unity of eight left-leaning student bodies, and Student Against Repression (SAR), the platform of general students.

The PSA leaders, at a rally in front of VC's office, urged the teachers and students to attend classes on September 12, the day previously declared for of not reopening of the university.

Additional security measures were taken on the campus on Thursday in fearing possible repercussion to the Syndicate decision.

Hearing the decision the students staying here and there in the city also expressed their frustration and anger. "The policymakers are playing with our fates. They should have understood our miseries, had they stayed on the streets outside the residences like halls," said a Surya Sen Hall resident who is now staying at his friend's residence at Nakhalpara.